



Nebraska Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program



A USDA program administered by:

Nebraska Department of Agriculture
and

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

2009

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The purposes of the Nebraska Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) are:

1. To provide resources in the form of fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey from farmers' markets and roadside stands to low-income seniors;
2. To increase the domestic consumption of agricultural commodities by expanding or aiding in the expansion of domestic farmers' markets and roadside stands; and
3. To develop or aid in the development of new and additional farmers' markets or roadside stands.

SFMNP PARTNERS

- Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA)
- Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care – State Unit on Aging
- Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Commodity Supplemental Food Program
- Nebraska Area Agencies on Aging
- Nebraska senior centers

COUPON USE POLICY

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) coupons are to be used only for authorized purchases of eligible foods from SFMNP certified farmers. Coupons used will be traced back to the farmer and participant using the coupons. Misuse of SFMNP coupons by either a farmer or a participant is against the law and offenders may be subjected to prosecution under applicable Federal, State, or local laws.

SENIOR PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

In order for participants to be eligible for the program, individuals must meet categorical and income eligibility requirements.

- **Categorically, participants must be 60 years of age or older.**
- **Income eligibility is measured in one of two ways:**
 - One-person household's annual gross income cannot exceed \$20,035.50.
 - Two-person household's annual gross income cannot exceed \$26,954.50.

Note: Income is defined as gross income before deductions.

- Senior citizens are required to complete and sign a Participant Application Form, which verifies their eligibility for the program.
- Coupons will be available in June through participating senior centers, Area Agencies on Aging offices, and Commodity Supplemental Food Programs' local distribution sites.
- Coupons can be used to redeem only fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey for human consumption from any Nebraska SFMNP certified farmer.
- One set of coupons per household. Local agencies will distribute the maximum amount of coupons, per household, during the month of June. SFMNP annual benefits cannot exceed \$48 per household.

Note: Because appropriations are limited, services will not be provided in every community and not all eligible seniors may be served. Waiting lists will be maintained only when there is some reasonable expectation of being able to provide benefits at a later date to additional, unserved individuals.

- Coupons can be **redeemed from any Nebraska SFMNP certified farmer on or before October 31, 2009.**
- Coupons are available in \$3 denominations and are for face value only. **No cash, change, credits, or refunds will be given.** More produce may be provided to the senior citizen or his/her proxy in order to bring food purchase(s) to match the face value of the coupon(s) presented.
- Upon discretion, an eligible senior can designate an authorized representative or proxy to conduct SFMNP transactions. A proxy can perform a number of functions, including applying for the SFMNP on behalf of the eligible senior, accepting and signing for SFMNP coupons when issued, shopping for eligible foods at the farmers' markets or roadside stands, and picking up and delivering eligible foods to the senior citizen. Local agencies require a proxy to present documentation, signed by the eligible senior, authorizing that individual to represent the senior in SFMNP transactions. The proxy is equally responsible for following program guidelines. He/she is required to show proof of age of the senior citizen (anything showing birth date) and documentation of the senior's income to establish the senior's eligibility for the program. This option enables disabled and in-bound senior citizens the opportunity to participate in this program.

FARMER PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

- Farmers wishing to participate in the SFMNP for the first time must attend a formal SFMNP training session offered by the NDA.
- Farmers must also enter into an agreement with NDA to accept SFMNP coupons. Farmers cannot register to accept 2009 SFMNP coupons after May 30, 2009.
- Participating SFMNP farmers will receive an authorized SFMNP vendor number from the NDA.
- Prior to cashing coupons, each one must contain an SFMNP vendor number and a signature of the senior participant (or his/her proxy).
- Coupons can be deposited at any Nebraska financial institution (bank, savings and loan, or credit union) **on or before November 30, 2009.**
- Compliance Monitors will visit some Nebraska SFMNP certified farmers to verify that the program is functioning properly. Farmers who fail to comply with SFMNP rules may face non-payment, suspension, and/or disqualification from the program. All coupons are reviewed to ensure that only certified farmers are redeeming the coupons.

ELIGIBLE FOODS

Only fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey for human consumption can be purchased with SFMNP coupons. For a complete list of eligible foods, refer to the Eligible Food List.

INELIGIBLE FOODS

Prohibited purchases include, but may not be limited to:

- Grocery store purchases;
- Non-locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, and/or honey;
- Creamed, whipped, flavored, or herbally infused honey;
- Processed fruit or vegetable products, jams, jellies, popcorn, juices and ciders, and baked goods of any kind, including fruit pies and breads; and
- Dried fruits or vegetables, prunes (dried plums), raisins (dried grapes), sun-dried tomatoes, and dried chili peppers; potted fruit or vegetable plants; potted or dried herbs; wild rice; nuts of any kind (even raw); honey; maple syrup; cider; seeds; eggs; meat; cheese; and seafood.



DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS

The nutrition education component of the SFMNP is accomplished through the direction of DHHS, Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care - State Unit on Aging. This agency is responsible for coordinating nutrition education with Nebraska Area Agencies on Aging, local senior centers, and Nebraska's Commodity Supplemental Foods Program. The nutritional education messages provided to eligible SFMNP participants focuses

on the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables and the messages contained within the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Nutrition education messages are designed to address the most urgent nutrition education needs of SFMNP participants.

The sixth edition of *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* is the federal government's science-based advice to promote health and reduce risk of chronic diseases through nutrition and physical activity.

Eating a healthy balance of nutritious foods is a central point in the Dietary Guidelines, but balancing nutrients is not enough for health. Total calories also count, especially as more Americans are gaining weight.

The Dietary Guidelines provides authoritative advice for people two years and older about how proper dietary habits can promote health and reduce risk for major chronic diseases. The Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee prepared a report based on the best available science; the report identifies 41 key recommendations, of which 23 are for the general public and 18 for special populations. They are grouped into nine general topics:

- Adequate Nutrients Within Calorie Needs
- Weight Management
- Physical Activity
- Food Groups to Encourage
- Fats
- Carbohydrates
- Sodium and Potassium
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Food Safety

Source: "New Dietary Guidelines Will Help Americans Make Better Food Choices, Live Healthier Lives." United States Department of Health and Human Services News Release [Washington] 12 Jan. 2005.

ELIGIBLE FOOD LIST:

Fruits (raw or fresh only): apples, apricots, blackberries, blueberries, cherries, chokecherries, crabapples, currants, elderberries, gooseberries, grapes, mulberries, raspberries, strawberries, pawpaws, peaches, pears, plums, persimmons.

Vegetables (raw or fresh only): arugula, asparagus, artichokes, beans, beets, broccoli, broccoli raab, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cantaloupes, calabasa, carrots, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, chayote, chard, collards, mustard & turnip greens, sweet corn and fresh Indian corn (blue, red, multicolored), cucumbers, dandelion greens, eggplant, epazote, garlic, Florence fennel, green onions, horseradish, Jerusalem artichokes, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuces, melons, muskmelon, mushrooms, okra, onions, oriental vegetables (bitter melons, wax melons), specialty greens, squash tips, parsley, parsnips, peas, and pea shoot tips, peppers, potatoes, pumpkins, radishes, rhubarb, sprouted seeds (beans, alfalfa, peas, clover, sunflowers), shallots, salad mixes, spinach, summer and winter squashes, squash blossoms, vine tips, sweet potatoes (yams), tomatoes, tomatillos, turnips, vegetable amaranth, watercress, watermelon, zucchini.

Herbs (fresh only): anise, basil, bay leaves, borage, calamints, camomile, chervil, chives, cilantro, corianders, dill fennel, germander, hyssops, lemongrass, laurels, lavenders, lemon balms, lovage, marjoram, mints, nasturtium, parsleys, pennyroyals, plectranthus, oregano, rosemary, sage, santolina, savory, silver beauties, sorrel, thymes, tarragon, fresh locally produced oriental herbs.

Honey (pure only): Creamed, whipped, flavored, or herbally infused honey is not allowed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Questions on SFMNP farmer certification:

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Questions on SFMNP coupon distribution:

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